

Russian Dissident Journalist Gets Suspended Jail Term, Banned From Work

YEKATERINBURG, Russia -- A Russian court in Yekaterinburg has imposed a 24-month work ban on a prominent journalist after finding her guilty of extortion.

Aksana Panova, founder and former editor of the independent news website Ura.ru, was found guilty of extortion in two instances and given a suspended two-year jail sentence.

Panova's supporters have argued that the charges were fabricated in retribution for her critical reporting on local government.

She had originally faced charges of fraud, extortion, and abuse of office that could have landed her in prison for up to 15 years.

However, on January 9 the court dropped the fraud and abuse charges.

Panova was also fined 400,000 rubles (\$12,000).

Her lawyers said the decision was an attempt to silence Panova and added they would file an appeal.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-journalist-banned-work/25225256.html>